

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10

PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 /123 W

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R 011535Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3034

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMCONSUL TURIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IT

SUBJECT: GROWING STRIKE PREPARATIONS

REF: ROME 1187

1. LARGE-SCALE STRIKE PREPARATIONS, BOTH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL, ARE INCREASING. THESE PLANS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE FREQUENT LESSER WALKOUTS WHICH HAVE BECOME ENDEMIC IN ITALY.

2. THE THREE MAJOR LABOR FEDERATIONS, AT THE MILAN PROVINCIAL LEVEL, HAVE AGREED ON A GENERAL STRIKE FOR FEBRUARY 7 IN THE MILAN AREA. IN ADDITION, SUBSIDIARIES OF THE THREE FEDERATIONS HAVE ALSO CALLED FOR STRIKES ON FEBRUARY 7. THESE WOULD POTENTIALLY INCLUDE ABOUT ONE MILLION WORKERS IN THE METAL, CHEMICAL AND TEXTILE PLANTS WHERE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY.

3. THE UIL DECIDED ON JANUARY 30 TO PARTICIPATE IN A NATIONAL

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GENERAL STRIKE AS PROPOSED BY THE CGIL, IF THE IMPENDING GOVERNMENT/

LABOR MEETING IS UNSATISFACTORY. CISL, CURRENTLY DEBATING THE PROPOSAL

IN MEETINGS OF ITS LOCAL UNION BODIES, HAS NOT YET TAKEN A POSITION;
THUS NO DATE HAS AS YET BEEN FIXED. TIMING WILL DEPEND ON NUMBER
OF FACTORS INCLUDING IMPACT OF FEBRUARY 7 STRIKES, BUT MID-FEBRUARY
DATE MOST LIKELY.

4. THE LONG-AWAITED MEETING BETWEEN THE LABOR CHIEFS AND PM RUMOR
IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 8. IN ADDITION TO FORMALIZING AGREE-
MENT ON PENSION REFORMS, THE CONFERENCE WILL EXPLORE THE ENTIRE
RANGE OF LABOR INTERESTS: PRICE DEVELOPMENTS, SOCIAL REFORMS,
INVESTMENT IN THE SOUTH.

5. MEANWHILE, A NATIONWIDE 24-HOUR RAILWAY STRIKE, WHICH HAD BEEN
CALLED TO BEGIN AT 2100 HOURS ON JANUARY 20, WAS CALLED OFF AFTER
A MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMPT
PRESENTATION TO PARLIAMENT OF BILLS CONTAINING PROVISIONS AGREED
UPON AS LONG AGO AS SEPTEMBER 1972, AND FORMAL ASSURANCES OF ACTION
ON OTHER AGREED-UPON ISSUES, ACCOUNTED FOR DECISION TO CANCEL
THE STRIKE.

6. COMMENT: THE GROWING STRIKE ACTIVITY AND LABOR UNREST ARE
INDICATIONS THAT THE GRACE PERIOD OF THE RUMOR GOVERNMENT MAY
BE EXPIRING; UIL SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI DESCRIBES RUMOR AS "A
CADAVER." OBJECTIVES WHICH THE UNIONS ARE SEEKING ARE NOT BEING
MET TO LABOR'S SATISFACTION.

7. GENERAL STRIKE CALL BY CONFEDERATIONS IS DUE IN LARGE MEASURE
TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ATTEMPT TO CONTROL AND CANALIZE WORKER UN-
REST WHICH THREATENS TO GET OUT OF CONTROL. NATURE OF AGITATION,
WHICH INDICATES DECLINING PREOCCUPATION WITH UNEMPLOYMENT IN
INDUSTRIAL SECTORS AND IS BASED ON WORKER NEED TO PROTECT INCOMES
ENDANGERED BY INFLATION, PLACES BROADER UNION GOALS OF REFORMS IN
JEOPARDY AS ENERGIES DEVOTED TO WAGE ISSUES.

8. GROWING LABOR UNREST, NO MATTER HOW THE CONFEDERATIONS MAY
ATTEMPT TO MODERATE IT OR TO AVER THAT THE STRIKES ARE NOT DIRECTED
AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, WILL HARDLY ENHANCE THE LIFE EXPECTANCY
OF THE RUMOR GOVERNMENT WITH ALREADY FACES THE IMPLICATIONS OF SKY-
ROCKETING ENERGY COSTS AND A WRENCHING REFERENDUM ON THE DIVORCE
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ISSUE IN MAY OR JUNE. THE DILEMMA IS HEIGHTENED BY THE GENERAL
REALIZATION ON THE PART OF LABOR THAT NO VIABLE, SUPERIOR ALTERNA-
TIVE TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS AT HAND OR IN PROSPECT. VOLPE

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